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THE JUBILE:

Moses

and

Mammon.

By the Author of "Sir Timothy Buncombe," "Thomas Wanless,
Peasant," &c., &c.

"THE Gold-god sits in the market-place,
With a broad-cloth suit and a brazen face,
Like a Civic Monopolist, one of the race
Whence his favourite clients are furnished ;
('Tis, therefore, no doubt, he assumes their disguise)
There's a flush on his cheeks, there's a gleam in his eyes,
And the brow he uplifteth to Babylon's skies
Seems to glitter as though it were burnished.
The least erected of Spirits that fell,
As MILTON declared him, seems wondrously well ;
He looks very much like a Stock Exchange Swell,
His pathway to opulence pegging.
And what is he doing, the great god Mammon ?
Sound sense may cry out such a pitiful sham on,
But verily, Sense, 'tis not nonsense or gammon,
The great god, Mammon, is—*begging !*"—*Punch.*

March, 12, 1887.

Price Sixpence.

MANCHESTER :

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THE JUBILE: MOSES AND MAMMON.

CHAPTER I.

THE DREAM.



WHAT is a jubile? I have asked many people the question; few have answered it correctly. To most people the word jubile—it is so spelt in most Bibles now, whether of the old or new version—seems to mean a general jollification, a making merry, a feasting, a gift giving, a time of general begging and congratulations. But that is not what the word means. To get at its real significance one must go back to the Hebrew scriptures, for the word is a Hebrew word, and the institution of which it is the name a Hebrew institution. We cannot, then, know correctly what “jubile” means till we have read about it in the Old Testament.

Not many, I fear, of those who are now chattering so glibly over “the Queen’s jubile” have consulted their Bibles about it. People generally know, of course, that a jubile applies to the fiftieth year of somebody’s life, or of some official’s rule, or of some institution’s function; but the bulk of folks cannot apparently tell why it should be the fiftieth year, or what such a period originally implied. It will be well, therefore, to go back to the origin of jubiles, and read what was said about them in the law of Moses. The passage is rather long, but, believe me, it is worth careful attention, for it summarises the great agrarian

polity, and the social organisation of that most remarkable of all peoples—the Jews.

It was to this law of the jubile I turned, then, when the begging of princes, and nobles, and bishops, and the jostling of “honours” seekers roused me to try to conceive for myself what a true jubile was, what the Jewish jubile might mean translated into modern life and needs. I read it with profound interest, and it stirred so many thoughts in my mind that I now lay it before you here, and beg you all to peruse it as if you had never seen or heard of it before. I quote from the 8th verse of the 25th chapter of Leviticus, according to the authorised version.

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years ; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof : it shall be a jubile unto you ; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you : ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubile ; it shall be holy unto you : ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.

And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour’s hand, ye shall not oppress one another : According to the number of years after the jubile thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee : According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it : for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another ; but thou shalt fear thy God : for I am the Lord your God. Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them ; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year ? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase : Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of

old fruit until the ninth year ; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store.

The land shall not be sold for ever : for the land is mine ; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it ; then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it ; that he may return unto his possession. But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile : and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold ; within a full year may he redeem it. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it throughout his generations : it shall not go out in the jubile. But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country : they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubile. Notwithstanding the cities of the Levites, and the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time. And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the year of jubile : for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold ; for it is their perpetual possession.

And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee ; then thou shalt relieve him : yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner ; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, nor increase : but fear thy God ; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.

And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee ; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant : But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee : And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt : they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour ; but shalt fear thy God. Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have,

shall be of the heathen that are round about you ; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land : and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession ; they shall be your bondmen for ever : but over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.

And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family : After that he is sold he may be redeemed again ; one of his brethren may redeem him : Either his uncle, or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him ; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubile : and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubile, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him : and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight. And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubile, both he, and his children with him. For unto me the children of Israel are servants ; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt : I am the Lord your God.

When I had mastered the meaning of this remarkable law, I could not help trying to see how it fitted into the present circumstances of this old English nation of ours. A moment's reflection discloses to the mind the fact that the jubile we are all talking about is not in the least degree like what Moses' jubile was. His was the great agrarian liberation law of the Jews—quite the opposite of Goschen's "Quinquennial Valuation Act." He proclaimed with an unmistakable distinctness that the soil was God's, and not the exclusive property of any man or body of men. "The land shall not be sold for ever," or, "in perpetuity," as the revised version puts it, "for the land is mine : for ye

are strangers and sojourners with me," God is represented as saying.

There lies the root idea of the Jewish jubile; and that jubile was but a crowning exhibition of the statute of limitations, according to the Jewish law, which was always in operation. Every seventh year there was a releasing of bondsmen, a forgiving of debts, a resting of the soil; and the year which followed the seventh "sabbath year," the fiftieth to wit, was the jubile, the great year of release, when usurer and land grabber and enslaver all had to forego their grip. This was what I saw to be the principal design, the grand central idea of the law of the jubile; and as I mused on it a picture arose in my mind of what our Queen's jubile might be, were our preachers and sect leaders to exhort the nation to, for once, make professions accord with deeds, and were the nation to listen and obey.

You believe the Bible to be a divine book, my good "preachers of the word." Sunday by Sunday you bow down before that book and call it the holy word of God; you discourse from texts taken out of it, and ask the people to accept it as a message from Heaven. And thousands upon thousands say they believe it and you, and there is much genuflexion and much self-congratulation among you all. "We are the privileged of the Lord," ye say, "unto us it is given to know the word of God above other men. Behold, we thank Thee, O Lord, that we are not as the multitude, who know not God, and understand not His work." Good! Then permit me, gentlemen and ladies all, to tell you my dream—a few of the fancies which crowded in on my mind as I mused upon this jubile of Moses, and the jubile of Queen Victoria, and on the condition of millions of my fellow countrymen, whom our high Christian civilization has thus far contrived only to steep in hopeless misery.

I imagined that the great ones of the nation had awakened to the consciousness that professed beliefs and deeds had to be reconciled. "Jubile, jubile, the Queen's jubile," I heard great

lords, great rack-renters, high-placed tax-shirkers, tithe-fed priests, usurers Jewish and Gentile, and the great army of the privileged exclaim. "Ah! the jubile has come. Then we must set our bondsmen free, and, for once in our lives, let justice and mercy rise above law." And I saw the Queen take the lead. "My people," she seemed to me to say, "these fifty years have I drawn a great portion of your substance from you, I and my offspring, and my German cousins, and the multitude of my menials. This have I done until the sum total of my revenues, and pickings, and pensions, from first to last, is nearly five and thirty million pounds. Behold, my people, I love you, though you may not think it. I pity you in my heart, and inasmuch as for these many years I have saved more than half my income, so that now I am one of the richest mortals in the world, I mean to make restitution. All my family and connexions have been handsomely provided for at your expense, down to my latest pet the young Battenberg. Having then nothing more in this world to wish for, and knowing I can take nothing hence with me, I now give to you all my savings. They amount to about £10,000,000 I think, but since my dear friend Brown died I have not had so clear an idea of the extent of my possessions. But I know that I possess enormous sums in the funds, in ground rents, in houses and lands, in jewels, and Indian plunder. All these, my private goods, I give to you in celebration of this jubile, which I desire to make the first jubile of the nation. Use this gift to redeem some of the war debts laid upon your backs in my time, or in any way that seems for the good of the people at large. The Lord bless you, my children. I love you all, and though, by reason of my complete seclusion, you may think I am indifferent to your welfare, you will henceforth, I trust, believe that it is not so. Throughout all the years that remain to me every penny which I do not spend of the half million or more a year I and my court and pensionaries now absorb shall be handed back to the people."

Following the example of the Queen, I then imagined that I saw the great nobles come forward each with his gifts and emancipations. "Rack rents shall be at an end," cried all landlords, "for we recognise that the earth is not ours but God's, and that we, therefore, can have no right to the exclusive use of its increase. No longer shall it be possible to taunt us by saying that our version of the Holy Scriptures reads, 'The earth is the landlords and the fulness thereof;' for lo, we give unto you our tenants the benefit of all your improvements. We offer you the freehold of your farms at prices which shall return to us no more than the natural or prairie value of the land, where no improvements have been made by us; and if you continue to hold your portion of God's earth under us, we agree, henceforth, to accept only such rent as may be left, after you have made a comfortable living by your labour, and fair returns on your improvements and capital outlay. Of all taxes we also shall bear our share, and in token of our readiness so to do, we hereby declare that in future all direct taxation of whatever kind, whether local rates and tithes, or imperial demands shall be levied first on the rent, whether of houses or lands.

"Ah! yes," at this point I thought I heard his Grace of Westminster exclaim; "and I, as the spokesman of all owners of London freeholds, proclaim aloud that we shall henceforth be ready to set all leaseholders free on terms which shall allow them the full value of the houses they have enriched our land by building, and that meantime and henceforth we are prepared to bear our just proportion of the local taxation which we now escape. We are ready to hand over one fifth of our rents from leasehold property to the new local Parliament of London, which we hope to see created this year, and to municipalities everywhere, so that the burden of the rates may be reduced. Thus do we purpose to lighten the load of the poor, and to bring back hope to those who live in darkness in the styes of the cities we own." "Yes, yes, we are ready," chimed in my Lord Salisbury, thinking of his slums

in Seven Dials and Soho, and his Grace of Portland, and his Grace of Bedford, and all the host of men who till then had stood in the place of God, and made the people their bondsmen for ever, and eschewed the payment of rates, and laid heavy dues upon the helpless dwellers in their rack-rented houses, so that they themselves might revel in brutalizing luxury.

Not to be behind in assisting the great ones of the land to celebrate a true jubile, the City of London Corporation, decrepit and ready to die of overfeeding, with the Livery Companies in its train, came forward, and declared by the mouth of its mayor that henceforth it would cease to batten upon the inheritance of the dead hand, and to withhold by fraud and guile property to which it and they had no title. "All our revenues we surrender to the people," cried the mayor; "all those charitable bequests, which are now diverted from their true objects, and devoured in riotous living or wasted in sustaining corruption; all our city parochial benevolent funds, which even our congregationless city parsons sometimes have difficulty in disposing of; and with this gift, which is equal to almost one million pounds a year, we humbly propose that the citizens of greater London shall pay for the education of their children, or liquidate the debt which they now have to bear for schools and metropolitan improvements wastefully made. By doing either of these things they will be relieved from all fear lest the coal and wine duties should again be imposed upon them. The poor shall have free coal, and all over the coalfields of the grimy North the weary toilers who dig out our fuel from the bowels of the earth shall be gladdened by the prospect that henceforward their bread will be one degree more sure." "Most nobly spoken," cried their Graces of Buccleugh and Devonshire, leaders they of all that hitherto leech-like band of men who have prospered and grown fat on mining "royalties." "Most nobly spoken! and we also do not mean to be behind hand; for it is our fixed purpose, from this day forward, to give all our royalties to the men who dig out our coal, Upon them and upon their employers shall the

money—less just taxes—be bestowed in equal parts, in order that they may cheapen fuel to the people, and yet live lives as comfortable as that of an average horse.”

After these came a mighty multitude of usurers, financial leeches, dishonest traders, and mongrel types of human beasts of prey, and with one cry said, “We accept the true jubile in good faith.” “At last am I indeed an Israelite,” cried Lord Rothschild, as he led the way—taking precedence even over them of the tribe of Levi for once—in the great surrender of bonds, forged by kings and politicians upon the lives and labours of the people. “For well nigh a century,” he exclaimed, almost weeping as he spoke, “over nearly two jubile periods, God forgive us, I and my relations and race have drawn millions upon millions out of your pockets in the shape of interest on the consolidated debt of the kingdom, but now we feel it time that this injustice should cease, and what we give we give freely. Long life and prosperity to you all.” With that he poured into the Treasury millions of obligations, held since his father’s and his grandfather’s day. And all the Tribe of Levi followed, and they of Benjamin and Judah—all the children of the dispersion came with their release offerings, until, when they had ended, they had reduced the accursed debt of the nation—a debt the product of crimes and bloody wars—by full fifty millions. What the Jews did the Gentiles could ill avoid doing, and so Lord Revelstoke, as head of the mighty house of Baring, came and also laid his gifts of release from debt at the nation’s feet. Grumbling a little was he, and inclined to rap out an oath or two, but giving of his store nevertheless, he and all his brethren.

Then I saw, as if by magic, the opinion of the whole people, and of their representatives, change upon this question of a public debt. “We have been fools, and blind,” each one said to his neighbour. “It is monstrous that this debt should have been suffered to crush down the people—some of it for nearly 200 years, the great bulk of it for more than three parts of a century. We must put an end to this monstrous injustice. Who are we

that we should take the place of God, and decree that the sins of the fathers shall be borne by the children, not to the third and fourth generations, but for ever and ever? We have done a great wrong." So did the people cry, and for once their representatives in Parliament became unanimous, and spoke, and did, not what was expedient and time serving, but what was honest and true. "We cannot," they said, "abolish this debt to-day, but let us now fix a period when all that a generous multitude of repentant usurers has suffered to remain of it shall cease to weigh on the necks of the poor, causing every infant born into this old land, once known as Merrie England but now so sad withal, to be a debtor to the "state" from the cradle to the grave. Cursed be the "state" which submits to any such iniquity longer, and may its end be desolation and ruin! We for our part will not endure it. England shall set the world an example of righteousness, and we therefore hereby decree that, at the next NATIONAL jubile fifty years hence, all interest on the remainder of the existing consolidated debt shall cease for ever, and that in future no debt, public or private, shall be allowed to exist in a legal form for a longer period than fifty years on any pretext.

At the news of this law, of these deeds of restitution and justice, the hearts of the people dissolved in joy. But there was yet one class which had not spoken. The holders of the benefices and endowments of the English Church establishment held back and clung to their goods, all but a few among them who were powerless to move the mass. "These revenues are not ours," said the bishops, "we hold them in trust for the service of God." That is to say they spent the money in high living, in sustaining great state, in carriages and horses, and all the trappings of luxury, and called this doing God's service. And the "Cure of souls" by virtue of the tithes he had appropriated defied the people in many a parish throughout old England, and played the part of a little Pope over his flock, and thought he had earned the right to waste the tithes of the poor.

And so this great organization of sectaries, headed by its Lord Bishops, in black aprons and glorious embroidered garments, saw the wave of righteousness flow over the mighty among the people, while they stood gloomily apart. Theirs, they said, by virtue of Harry the Eighth's laws and thievings, were the revenues of the tithes, of the lands fraudulently obtained in ancient days by priests and monks of the money and power-seeking communion of Rome; theirs were the privileges and emoluments of the great universities; theirs the endowments of the great charity schools, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and the rest. To abandon anything would be to yield to dissent, and to the "wave of infidelity" which was passing over the world. What had they to do with Jewish jubiles? Were their tithes and endowments and plunder wheedled out of the dying hands of ancient robbers taken from them, the knowledge of a gold-loving Deity would die out in the land.

And to this position they held, until the great reaction towards justice and freedom on the part of all other privileged, and hitherto wealth hoarding, classes of the community had left them alone, conspicuous by their selfishness and by the unhallowed pietism, which served but to increase the popular detestation of their unctuous greed. At last the new spirit seemed to be infused into these men also. There was the stirring of dry bones among them. They became ashamed, roused themselves, and manfully looked upon the truth to do it.

"The tithes are not ours at all," Archbishops and Bishops, and Deans and Archdeacons, and all the "inferior" clergy at last voted in convocation assembled. According to the Scriptures, whose teachings it has been too much our habit to despise, the tithe is not exclusively for the maintenance of preachers, cannot by the New Testament be theirs at all; for there all who preached lived, either, like Paul, by the labour of their own hands, or upon the freewill offerings of the people. Tithes were originally, in the law and customs of England, destined for the succour of the poor, far more than for the sustenance of clergy. They were God's own

poor-rate, and we have in course of centuries corruptly appropriated them for our own use, and hid the theft beneath a cloud of pious phrases. But we are able to do so no longer. The spirit of righteousness has asserted itself in the land, and we cannot any longer be deaf to its teachings. We therefore surrender the pretensions of our sect; we give back to the poor what has always been theirs; and henceforth abandoning all our selfish demand, ceasing to make our professions of religion a pretext for extortion and greedy malversation of funds never ours, we agree to live by faith. As our deeds are, so be our reward from this day onwards. There will be less millinery, and incense swinging, and candle burning, and upholstery, and tailoring about our religion, but we trust it will be at least genuine in its unselfishness.

Great, indeed, and far-reaching, was this victory. It made the spirit of a true, manly, brother-loving religion once more a real power in the lives of men.

Looking ahead on the years which followed this great jubile, with its crowning act of self-sacrifice on the part of bishops and clergy, I seemed to see a new England rise up from the dens of despair, where the ragged and famishing children of the old had so long lain groaning. Instead of want and misery, and disease and crime, there was manliness, independence, comfort and peace. No longer did the multitude of the dispossessed, and the hunger-driven, huddle together in towns; the people spread abroad on the face of the land, and built themselves cottages, and bought little farms, and England became like a garden, fertile and fragrant, and full of peace and sweet content. Nor did the busy wheels of industry cease. On the contrary they hummed and whirred more loudly than before; for wealth was no longer grasped by the few, and hunger and nakedness left as the portion of the many. Workmen and employers lived together in concord, because each in his degree, shared in the profits of labour. True co-operation had taken the place of sham, and limited liability with all its hypocrisies, deceits, and frauds had made way for a union of masters and

workmen in the honest development of industry. The great estates of haughty nobles were all broken up, or so governed in accordance with the new spirit of generous self-forgetfulness that no man was robbed of his bread by sanction and power of law, or defrauded of what he had earned by his own industry and thrift at the will of a capricious landlord. There was no longer any Irish question, because the Irish had no landlords, no alien administration. Peace reigned everywhere, and the later life of England was joyous as her youth had been before Harry the lustful stole and ravished, or vixen Bess conceived a poor law. But the mirth of England's age was that sober mirth, which comes at times to those who have been tried in the fire of adversity.

And what of the slaves, the bondsmen of alien nations for whom Moses made provision in his law? We have nothing akin to them, prosaic readers may say. Oh, yes; we have. But the dusky sons of India and Egypt were not to be forgotten in the glorious jubile of which I dreamed. For them also the day of freedom had dawned, and Mr. George Joachim Goschen himself was the first to say in their regard that he had pushed the rights of property too far. "I have done my best these many years," he said, "to leave the Egyptians only the skin upon their bones, but now I repent, and all the debt bonds so vilely imposed upon them by Ismail the Turk, with my help and the help of such as me, lo! I burn all of these that I have left in my hands, and I pray every Englishman and woman to do the like. Also do I most cordially desire that every English bailiff to the bondholders now in Egypt, be he soldier or civilian, titled grandee and gold-raker or humble policeman, may forthwith come out of that land of bondage, and have no longer part nor lot in the oppression of an innocent people. Let England wash her hands of a foul business, a business which savours of the worst days of pagan Rome, and which has smacked of blood ever since I knew it, the blood of the Fellaheen ready to perish. Proclaim freedom to the Egyptians, my brethren; rather let all property vanish like St.

Peter's heavens than iniquity such as I helped to set up in the old land of the Pharoahs continue to exist. Let the down-trodden Copts and Arabs deal as seems to them good with their vampires of unjust creditors—creditors, not of them, but of Ismail. Their consent was never asked when the debt was laid upon their backs ; they may not ask ours when they throw it off. If they treat us with contempt they will do us no less than justice. Some might suffer by Egyptian repudiations, but better that they should do so than that the Egyptian bondholder should continue like a foul unsatiable horse-leech to feed upon the very life blood of a meek and patient people, whom I have seen aweary and hungered oft, but never pitied till now, when the spirit of a new life is upon me. And, after all, what would any sufferings of ours be compared to what Ismail and I, and the impious gangs who helped us, laid upon Egypt.”

Even as George Goschen spoke did it come to pass. The Egyptians were released from our domination, and forthwith they rid themselves of their slavery to the Christian and Jewish usurers of the west, who fled for their lives, as the guilty flee from the avengers of blood, the moment they knew that English armies would no longer guard them.

An equal spirit of justice, as strong a desire to help the weak and to deal tenderly with the heavy laden, became manifest in our actions towards India. With the debt we had imposed upon the helpless races there, we decided to do as with our own, and not only that, we at once reduced the sum of its interest, and we lessened the Home charges of the Indian Administration by cutting off what was rotten, dishonest, redundant therein. We threw open all branches of the Indian service to natives, and we established local free institutions throughout the Peninsula and Burmah, and educated the races we found there to agree together in amity, and to manage their own affairs. Such did I dream was the jubile of Queen Victoria as manifested towards the nations we had enslaved.

And this jubile spirit spread in that world open to my inward sight to the remotest corner of the British Empire, putting new life into the Colonies, where the slavery of debt had been blighting the future as vilely as at home. New heart and energy were infused into the lives of the poor everywhere. It was a jubile which blossomed into an era of concord and peace. Soldiers were not needed to maintain this "Imperial Federation" of men and brethren. It stood together united within by a spirit of unselfishness and mutual trust, and therefore was it invulnerable from without. Redeemed from her bondage, free and giving freedom to all her children and dependents, this brave old land of ours became an envy and a wonder among the nations of the earth.

CHAPTER II.

THE REALITY.

THIS was the jubile I dreamed about under the spell of the great Hebrew emancipator and law-giver. A most fascinating dream you all will allow, I hope, most fascinating, and eke most mad. Yes, I admit instantly and without hesitation that the world we now live in is such as Moses, with all his wisdom and insight, never guessed at. That is to say, I admit this now and after much thinking, but believe me it was with reluctance I surrendered the Jewish ideas about a jubile. They were once a wonderful people, the Jews, and the constant repetition of the word jubile by everybody, contributed to misguide me. The "preachers of the word," I thought, must surely have some lingering sympathy with the ideas of Moses, much though they may be habituated to bow down and do homage to the words of the Bible while putting their own interpretation thereon.

But it would not do. The State priests I saw were merely taking the chance to beg for more money, and all the land did but as they. At last, in spite of myself, I had to give the thing up. Not even old Samuel, that legendary ruler of the Tribes of Jacob, was able to help me. I tried his notions about kings—you know he let them out when he was angry because the people were tired of him and his disagreeable and monotonous uprightness—but they gave me no material help in understanding this modern king-worship of ours. He never, in his utmost haste, foresaw that in these latter days we should address this our most sacred and sublime of human majesties in language formerly appropriated to the Deity, and grovel like slaves at her feet.

No, Samuel's notions of kinghood were primitive and pastoral, and would not fit. When I tried to apply them as a test of the worth of our sovereign, whose jubile year is now about to close according to the Jewish law, the attempt broke utterly down.

So open your eyes, my friends, as I have had to open mine, and look abroad in this modern world of ours. Put out of your head all the ridiculous ideas which a study of the Jewish sacred books might stir within you, and have done with "jubiles" as they might be. We have to do with the actual, and the "jubile" of to-day is no more like the original than the box of French bonbons presented to the guests attending the voracious gorges and drink bouts of a city livery company, resembles the "baskets of broken meats" once on a time bestowed upon the poor, when the feast was ended, by the traders who founded these guilds. Accept modern religion, modern ideas of order, modern conceptions of the deities who govern our life, for what they are, and try not any more to test them by what has been or what should be.

This was the advice I gave to myself, loyally, and with an honest purpose. But when its application was tried the difficulties loomed as large as ever. Grant that our "jubile" is to be a time of universal huzzas, of begging for money and yet more money, of charity by cheque and public advertisement, of "honours," distributions, of incense burning under the nose of the Sovereign, still I wanted to know why? Has she done so very much for us, this noble and exalted atom of humanity, that we should fall down and worship her, and, in the most approved manner of worshippers, empty our purses into her store?

When you come to think of it this question also will seem absurd. It ignores the distinction which modern existence under kings and emperors compels us to draw between the multitude, and the great ones who rule that multitude.

All the world over you will find that wherever kings and emperors hold nations in their hands, these nations are divided

into two broad classes—those who eat and those who are eaten. For the modern fashion of kingship is, when all is said, but an elaboration of the primitive notions of the ancient Jew. The business of kings is to foment wars, to make life comfortable for their followers and for themselves, to impose taxes and waste them, to bestow “honours” in return for services rendered, and generally to sit upon the necks of “their” people. Their business has always been to do this. They surround themselves with a great array; they have grades and classes of “honour;” they have their high priests to bless them when they go forth to slay, or rather to bless the captains they send, and to return thanks for the greatness and success of the slaughterings. Such is the law of their being, whether they play chief actor at the head of a “constitution,” or wield the iron mace of a despot.

Examined from this point of view it will no doubt strike the reader that the only stupid persons labouring in this jubile celebration masquerade, are those who seek to import into it something of the old Jewish flavour—the people who would build houses for the poor, or feed them, or give land as parks for their recreation, or who in any way try to enact the part of the free-hearted giver, instead of the getter. The man or woman who seeks not his own in this modern jubile is only a fool.

The true genuine jubileites—if the word may be allowed—are those who work for number one, who form part of the great army which has profited, and which hopes yet to profit by self-seeking service rendered to the occupant of the throne. That throne is only the apex of a social structure, whose base rests upon the back of the dumb Titan, whom our autocrats and plutocrats delicately name “the masses.” You might compare this social structure to some strange, gigantic cactus, whose roots lie deep in the soil, sucking its substance up, and storing it in its sap cells—plutocrats’ pockets—building it into its leaves and spines, and finally blossoming into one magnificent gorgeous flower, “Her most gracious Majesty.” The great body of the people forms the

soil upon which royalty and its sustaining nobles, its toadies, and "honours" hunters, and lick platters live and thrive.

Now I trust we begin to see clearly. Those who sing "Hosanna to the Queen-Empress, all glorious be her name," are not the people, but the people's masters. They are really singing their own praises, and hoping as they sing to advance their own interests. This man sings for a title, yonder holy church beneficiary for a bishopric, that man lower down for a royal smile or nod which will increase his small importance, or his power to steal your goods and mine—in an "honourable" way; at the very least the men and women all who are loudest in this business expect to see their "names in the papers."

Are we then to despise the whole display? Yes and no. Yes, if your contempt fall upon these worshippers and sycophants who strain the English tongue to find words for the expression of their abasement. No, if you wish to read the signs of the times, or to deal honestly by the Queen, poor lonesome old woman, victim of fate; or—if you think it better so—pitiful in the eye of Heaven.

I prefer the latter course, and esteem the present an excellent opportunity to analyse the structure of our "constitution," and the position of royalty among us. What, I want to ask, has Her Majesty the Queen done for these crowds of meek or mock worshippers now dancing before her, "calling aloud," and (metaphorically) "cutting themselves with knives till the blood gushes out" to do her honour? What has she or her court or kindred done for us, the people, the soil upon which the great man-consuming social organism she stands at the head of rests, by which it exists?

Ah! there is just the point! This was why I had to throw overboard old Samuel the Jew's crude model. His kings were mere petty tyrants, who stole this man's vineyard, that man's daughter, tenths or fifths of the people's substance. But our most noble Queen is something greater—or less, as you like it. She is the head of a social system, a religious system. Her

position is that of a "great constitutional monarch," the keystone of one of the most marvellous man-devouring systems of society the world ever saw.

Now, clearly I cannot rush away and blame Her Majesty for all that this system does. It might be that she was quite innocent, while the system itself was charged and surcharged with abominations. Before we can determine, then, Her Majesty's rights and claims to a high, tax paid, most glorious lickspittle "jubile" and apotheosis of flunkeyism, we must see where she stands in relation to the structure she is set to crown.

Now I hold that the land system, British territorialism, is the root and trunk of this mighty social structure. With the British landlords I therefore make an effort to get under way.

Do you know what our magnificent British land system is? I guess most people do not. It is a thing by itself, and hard to describe. To compare it with the systems of other countries might mislead, for it stands apart, the wonder of the world. The tongue or pen of a Goschen might do it justice, mine cannot.

One or two facts, however, are obvious. By this magnificent organisation it has been possible for a mere handful of the population of this country to say, anytime these two hundred years, to the millions beneath them, "surrender to us your all. The fruits of your labour are ours. If you cannot live on what we leave you, depart the realm; go to the workhouse to be fed there at the expense of those among you not yet stripped naked, or go and die in the nearest ditch, or hide yourself away in the slums of our overcrowded cities, where we may anew have the power to squeeze out what is left of your life blood."

The most vivid recent illustration of the wonderful power which this system puts into the hands of the few is to be found in the Glenbeigh and other Irish evictions. The next best may be seen any day in fair English fields lying untilled, or half-tilled, all over the country, laid waste by landlords' ruth and greed, or by the landlord's "dead hand"—the hand which trans-

mits the soil on which we live from generation to generation to spendthrift children, it may be ; which loads it with "settlements," and keeps the evil-doer from feeling the consequences of his sin.

Once on a time, I think when one of those unsavoury Scotch Stuarts was on the throne—but the plot had been thickening for a century or two before—the soil of this country was surrendered to a handful of people to have and to hold "they and their heirs for ever." These people made the laws governing the contracts by which all the rest of the nation was permitted to exist, and having so made them as to bind the tiller of the soil, the leaseholder, whether of house or farm, and the "tenant-at-will" everywhere, hand and foot, they then instituted a system of cant whereby every injustice they could imagine was called an expression of the "sacred majesty of the law," every effort to get justice denounced as "conspiracy," "rebellion," "insufferable defiance of the law," to be put down with a strong hand.

Cunning fellows they were, too, these men, for to make assurance doubly sure, they attached to their interests a whole army of territorial priests marshalled by most holy "Lord" Bishops, whose business it was to teach the stupid multitude to worship our glorious Constitution, "Queen, Lords, and Commons," under pretence of worshipping the Almighty. It was easy to perpetrate this piece of hypocrisy and *double entendre*, because the British landlord was, and is, for all the rest of the inhabitants of these islands, nothing else than the Almighty. He could legally rob you and me of every penny of our substance were we farming his land, and he robs us of much that is ours, not his, when he gets us huddled into towns of his owning and our building. It is in his power to force a helpless community, which feels a desire to live and thrive in the land of its nativity, to guarantee him against all the ills of humanity. Harvests might be bad, but the landlord must not suffer thereby. He is protected by his "contract," drawn in his favour, in virtue of the land monopoly he enjoys, and of the laws he has made. His rent is fixed, a sacred bond ;

the "rights of property," as Mr. "Egyptian-skeleton" Goschen will tell you, are holy and inviolate when they mean the right of the landowners and bondholders to take all that you have. You have no alternative but to submit, or perish.

Of course all humanity—even landlord humanity—is liable to err, and it does sometimes happen that British landlords in the plenitude of their foolishness are merciful. But these men are looked upon as traitors to their order, and should have no share in her most ineffable Majesty's jubile. The landlord order can only be true to itself by standing on its "rights" according to its laws, no matter though these rights should depopulate the country. Nay, landlords are even now ready to accept your means and mine—if we have any left—to enable them to ship what it pleases them to call our "redundant population" to other shores. Their maxim is "no surrender;" ground game is more to them than men any day.

An esteemed friend of mine suggests that this obstinacy is mere foolishness, because depopulation, carried to extremes, would destroy the landlords' revenues. This friend, who forgets "sporting rents," even goes so far as to suggest that the attraction which may bring Macaulay's New Zealander to view the ruins of London Bridge could easily be our waste prairie lands. He might be here on a prospecting expedition with a view to colonisation. That, of course, would be when all the landlords had died off or returned to their primitive savage hunting state, as well as what was left their subject population.

But this suggestion, though ingenious, appears to me far fetched for several reasons, notably for these two—(1) It will be remembered that I have said our present land system has existed for some hundreds of years. This itself is a presumption that it may continue to exist for some time longer. (2) Not only so, but we must recollect that during the whole of these centuries, with little or no intermission, the landowners who, with our kings, shared the labour of governing the country, have done their best, year in

and out, to starve the people by thousands, to get them slain by tens of thousands in wars waged all over the globe, and to expatriate them on whatever pretext came uppermost.

In spite of all these praiseworthy efforts to keep down their human "ground vermin," these landlords have still a great population to cope with. To be sure this population is much less rural than it was. It has to be fed by the tribute we exact from foreign or conquered countries, and it might therefore be dangerous to our sacred institutions were it to become hungry through, say, another Indian rebellion. What "tribute" means in this instance may be understood by one single fact. The usurers, officials, and traders of this "United Kingdom" receive every year more than £30,000,000 from India for money lent, "services" rendered, &c. An Indian ryot, say peasant, is glad if he earns from 12s. to 18s. *per month*; out of that he has to keep himself and his wife and family. Measured by the earnings of an English artizan, this "tribute" is therefore equivalent for Indians to nearly £300,000,000. That is the load we lay there. On this foundation do we build our magical civilization, which no earthly power, our fond fools think, ever can destroy. Notwithstanding, however, the *paper* basis of this Pagan civilization, sustained by mortgages, the land may not be ready for the enterprising New Zealander in your time or mine. Some of our children though, if not starved out meanwhile, may live to see him.

This perhaps is of the nature of a digression, for my principal object is just now to insist upon the one important consideration that her most sublime Majesty Queen Victoria, defender of the (landlords') faith, "Empress" of two hundred millions odd land slaves in India, and head of innumerable orders of merit, valuable in her earthly paradise, is not responsible for our land system. It existed before her day, and it may exist when she is no more—"What, can so holy and exalted a personage die?" It would e'en seem so, my good reader. I cannot even assure you that the maw worm will respect her dead carcase any more than yours or

mine. The thought is melancholy, but such is the law of life, even for kings. Our human god who sits upon a throne, and towards whom all landlords, all sycophants, all territorial priests and hierarchs ever bend their eyes in hope and expectation, is as mortal as a "Divine" Roman Emperor, or as that Baal whose priests a forward Jewish democrat called Elijah once so rudely mocked. "Cry aloud," said he to the priests and ministrants of that deity, "for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened."

Why, that cynical "prophet" might have had Her Majesty our Queen in his mind even as he spoke—Her Majesty journeying to Aix-le-Bains or Balmoral. Such is life, as fate, shall I say, wills. What a sad thought it must be to "his grace the right honourable and most reverend Edward White Benson, D.D., Lord Archbishop of Canterbury," and all his clerical army, that this, their starred and jewelled and be-ribboned god in the flesh, must die. And yet he at least has his consolation. He may get another god, and, meanwhile, £15,000 a year is better than want and the hedge side for shelter in a winter's wind, which is the lot of so many of the poor wretches whose "tithe" he so daintily and mincingly consumes.

Again I degress; and yet, no—I have but sought to bring before the mind of my readers the exceeding greatness of the basis upon which our social order rests. Kings come and go, but the landlord lives for ever. "All the land and all that is thereon is yours," says the law to a few thousand men and women, and we, the people, lie beneath their feet. You would blame the law for this? Well, I do not object to that; only, I repeat, blame not the Queen. She is but the apex of the social pyramid—the flower of the great cactus, which lives upon the substance of five and thirty millions of people, mostly toil worn, sad of heart, and a-weary, a-weary of the world.

It would be unjust also to blame her for the strength and far ramifying suction power of the money-compelling understructure,

the sap-drawing roots, which our wonderful landowning class has elaborated beyond its primary "rights" over us. Having all power hitherto—for they have it still, thanks to the high degree of craven souled flunkeyism to which they have reduced us—these landlords have amused themselves by seeing "how much the nation would bear," as a railway manager might say. That is the universal plan in this country. All adopt it who can get the chance, be they landlords or not. But the landlords as law makers and war makers are the men who carry the art to its highest perfection.

"First of all," they begin by saying, "in law, and according to the contracts we put upon you, all that you have is ours." Then they go on to say, "In addition to what we ourselves want from you, you shall pay as nearly as possible all the demands of the supreme government that we set over you. You shall find money for the wars we wage wheresoever it pleases us; you shall pay for the keep of our fighting forces and of the government departments, which we have instituted expressly for your benefit, in order that your substance may be freely and corruptly spent; and, finally, you shall pay for the proper maintenance of this most gracious and unapproachable sovereign, whom we put at the top of the structure as the chief ornament and effulgent glory thereof, the being in whose name all our corporate exactions shall be perpetrated."

Here is a most simple and admirable plan, far beyond the dreams of the ancients; but if we are disposed to blame anybody for its perfection, I do not think it should be Her Majesty. The blame, in my feeble view, rests upon us—the people. We have bared our backs to the smiter, we have bent without a murmur beneath the load, we have licked the hands that smote us, we have gloried in our bondage, and have ever been ready to shout for joy when our masters cried, "More, more, we want yet more of your substance. Give us the bread you have won, and the children of your bodies, as sacrifices to our Moloch!"

So far from casting blame upon Her Majesty I am disposed to think that we, in some regard, owe her thanks. Considering her opportunities she might, I feel persuaded, have done very much more than she has to further the aims of our taskmasters, and before I conclude I hope to persuade you that though we may not be able to join in celebrating her jubile because we can have no chance of making anything by so doing, we shall at the very least be able to say that she has well deserved all that our great bamboozlers are eager to bestow upon her.

Just consider for a little the blame the Queen escapes. We cannot for example charge her with having been a main instrument of laying upon our backs the deadly load of the national debt. That was done by her grandfather principally—by him and his masterful ministers. They did it without asking our fathers' leave at all, merely because they took the power to do so, and because foolish old George III. had an idea that he could outstrip the Jewish captain, Joshua, of old. He wanted to do far more than make the sun and moon stand still, the besotted old man. His aim was to put back the clock of time by a good round century. He and his ministers failed in that endeavour, but could not be convinced of its impracticability until they had spent more than a thousand millions of money, the product of British labour, and helped to destroy some million or two of human lives in all quarters of the globe by violence, by famine and disease, by rapine and every imaginable cruelty. Neither our fathers nor we were benefited by this waste; nevertheless the money borrowed at that time for the perpetration of those ghastly crimes is a debt of ours to this day, all because our great landocracy is a powerful body, and when, aided by the plutocracy, capable of enforcing its "rights."

For you will further observe two effects which have flowed from these butcheries and conquests. On the one hand, it has created here a great buttress or support to landlordism in the shape of "fundholders." Multitudes of Jews and Gentiles and

pious persons of all degree lent of their savings to the territorial Government to enable it to slaughter and annex, and it is to these persons and their descendants that we, the dumb, foolish people are compelled to owe this money. Until we pay it—which may be when the trumpet of doom sounds the wreck of worlds—we have to find the “interest” upon this debt. It is “a sacred obligation” of the nation’s, we are told, and the holders of this bond upon our blood and sinew are, by reason of their interest in our labour, always ready to make common cause with the demigods of the land in upholding their “rights.” Here, then, is a most subtle, cunning, and powerful auxiliary to the landlord, and, in addition to being compulsory debtors for land rent, we, “the masses,” are compulsory debtors for interest upon the money spent in all the wars waged by this country from the days of William and Mary until now.

Furthermore, and secondly, these great charges upon us have not been without fruit abroad. The money was mostly wasted, but here and there the war-makers secured a certain amount of compensation in the shape of immense tracts of land. They lost us North America and seized India, where the English race can never settle, but where they suck the honey like the passing bee; and “colonies” too numerous to mention. By reason of these possessions, all of which our lords and masters have loaded up with debts, the number of the plutocrats whose interest in us is identical with the landowners, has been indefinitely increased.

But these dependencies also involve obligations. They have to be defended. By the law of their being, they have to be enlarged at times, and accordingly it is necessary for us, “the masses,” to toil and to give our sons up to the death, and to live hungry often in order that all these things shall be done. Here lie the blessings and necessities of empire for the bulk of the nation, and debt grows withal, and trade is fostered by yet more debt and colonies, dependent upon our England, groan under the same system as we do, and glorious is the year of jubile for fund-

holder and landgrabber throughout all this proud empire on which the sun never sets. Money, money! bonds, bonds! lay the loads on the backs of the people. This is the usurer's jubile.

Think of this matter, honest reader, and, if possible, disabuse your mind of all cant. Realise, if possible, where this unrivalled system of Government by class, and prosperity by conquest and debt is hurrying us; but do not, oh! I beg you, do not blame her Most Gracious Majesty for what you think you may suffer under it.

Naturally, I admit, one would expect that the reign of a woman would be a reign of peace, and it is, at first blush, a cruel disappointment that it has been a reign of war. There has been more fighting, of a sort, done during the period of Queen Victoria's occupancy of this most sacred British Parliamentary throne, than in the life of any monarch England ever had, save and except her grandfather. And more than that, Her Majesty herself has often been most warlike in her attitude. It has been her delight to be called an empress—a mistress of legions—and though she could not, of course, go forth to war herself, she has been so cordially interested in the business as to have had two of her sons trained expressly as professional fighters. One of them was actually in a war, and few can forget the joy which thrilled through the thin souls of all the sycophants when the news came that this son's heroic conduct in guarding the baggage at the ever-renowned slave hunt and battue of Tel-el-Kebir won the ecstatic admiration of his Commander-in-Chief. What a proud woman our gracious sovereign must have been that day to see her anxious motherhood thus rewarded. What a splendid return such a deed of daring was for all the toil she had had in inventing orders, in presenting flags, in gazing on "march pasts," in pinning medals with her own sacred hands on the breasts of the greatest among the slayers in uniform. Can you not forgive Her Majesty much when you think of it?

Perhaps. Yet there are men who will have doubts, who accuse Her Majesty of not only professing a love for deeds of king and priest-blessed murder, but of actually fomenting wars. Captious persons do say that there never would have been any Crimean war for instance, had not Queen Victoria and her autocrat-apeing German husband, Albert the gilded, fallen in love with that curious, unwashable specimen of the stuffed demi-god, Louis Napoleon. And now, even in her old age, in her very jubilee year according to the obsolete Jewish reckoning—there are people who allege that her most gracious Majesty nearly bullied the feminine-minded Lord Iddesleigh and the sycophant-souled, fire-mouthing Marquis of Salisbury into forcing the country to go to war for the Battenberg—latest and (once) poorest of royal pets.

There are people, I say, to be found capable of saying these things, but I do not wish to be one of them. In my opinion their minds are narrow, and they fail to grasp broad principles. A proper view of the position of this country ought to show them that war is a necessity of kings and queens, the concomitant of empire. An imperial people must slay to live. It is the penalty, or pleasure of their existence. Therefore in fomenting wars, in boasting of the heroic deeds of "my troops," in showering honours on successful commanders, and in asking largesse of the nation for them, her most gracious Majesty was but obeying the law of her being. We, the "masses," may not profit by the working of that law. Its product for us may be hunger and misery, emigration, a life of sad unrelieved toil, but that cannot alter the facts. and at least the court strutters, the gold-laced upper soldiers and sailors who do the fighting, or see that our children and brothers do it and die manfully in it, gain by the business. It is fitting that they at all events should hold high jubilee—glorifying themselves.

And indeed I am not sure that I could not go farther and say that we, the "masses," should not grudge either these men or Her Majesty all that they can get. This view I lean towards,

because on examination of the facts I have discovered that our modern wars, the wars of the "Victorian epoch," have, after all, been singularly cheap and easy wars. The only one of them which cost England directly as much money as would have bought up the fee simple of half the soil in the "United Kingdom" at a "prairie valuation," was the Crimean war. But then that was a war with a civilized power, whereas nearly all our other wars since 1837, have been with people more or less savage, whom it was easy and safe to slay. They were wars that enriched the commanders and the jobbers and stealers, rather than wars of danger. The fighting business was thus not only a comfortable one in the main for the higher orders of being engaged therein, but a highly edifying one to all Christian folks at home. They could all look upon the slaughter of naked untutored savages as the destruction of so much ground game, and "praise God from whom all blessings flow," that cheaply we could butcher so. If in benevolent mood, the priests of Mammon, in their resplendent garments, might even busy themselves in getting up subscriptions for the purpose of teaching the unslain remnants of the benighted heathens the blessings of "missionary and rum," under guidance of "lord" bishops of the most approved hybridity.

One cannot sufficiently dwell on this policy of cheap and easy conquest. Why, it has not only enlarged the territory of the empire by a continent or so since Queen Victoria came to the throne, thereby almost indefinitely widening the scope for the land grabber, usurer, and mining prospector *à la* Streeter, and the trader in strong drink or shoddy goods, but it has at the same time given the most magnificent scope the mind could conceive for the stealing humour of the services, and thereby made the fighting profession the most desirable in the country. Matters have infinitely progressed since George the Third's day. Then, however the barnacles might steal, the fighters got hard knocks, and, with the exception of Lord Wellington, little else. Now a scented soldier or sailor has but to go and do a little holidaying

and pleasant ball practice, like that of Admiral Seymour's before hapless Alexandria, or like General Wolseley's at that before-mentioned glorious slave hunt of Tel-el-Kebir, and lo! peerages and pensions or backsheesh fall upon them like crowns of glory and a golden rain, while the thefts of the gentlemen who condescend to absorb the taxes at home, prosper as they never prospered before.

Here I contend is progress for which the "upper classes" at all events may well celebrate a jubile. And we, "the masses?" Let us be thankful that we are not now spending our substance and our lives in a death grapple with Russia. Yes, we also in a qualified way, and without weeping over much at our misery, may let the "jubile" of the ageing queen be celebrated in all its tinsel glory with boom of gun, blare of trumpet, and swing of censer, amid the shouts of the adoring mob of tax swallows, usurers, self seekers, and their attendant flunkeys.

For it should further, and in all justice, be remembered that our noble masters and their ever glorious sovereign have not been wholly unmerciful, or, if you prefer it, not unmindful of prudence, over this butchery business. I can conceive it possible that this most stolid English race of ours might have worked itself into fury, and uttered threats, had the cost of all the wars of Victoria's reign been drawn from it. We have at any rate been spared this ordeal, for some of our most bloody and terrible Victorian wars—those of Afghanistan, the conquering wars of India, the fierce struggle of the mutiny there, two of the Burmese wars, and, I think, sundry other fights, or attempts to fight, have been wholly or partially paid for by the labour of the ryots of India. By this most excellent plan their load of misery has been augmented, while ours has perhaps been kept down, and thus a happy mean established. You have but to look around you at other nations to see how well we have fared in this respect. Behold France, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Russia staggering and ready to fall beneath the weight of their debts and military establishments.

They have no room for "jubiles;" but as for us—have not our wise and prudent masters spared us? have they not made the dusky sons of Ind groan even as we?

"Perhaps," says a voice in my ear doubtfully, "perhaps, but what if all our people, English and Indian, lie alike loaded with chains, what if the cost of peace to us now be as deadly as the cost of war was wont to be? What if we too stagger and groan under a weight of 'peace' charges such as our fathers never saw. What if the wars we now fight are but like pebbles upon the top of an intolerable and ever rising load, the cost of keeping the peace?"

To these most pertinent questions I have no answer ready. Bureaucrats, have you? Is it true that you have used our little wars as a pretext for increasing your thefts? Can it be that all this parade of making ready for war in order to be at peace, this howl for more ships and guns, more men, more forts, more money, money, money, in which a blind, hysterical press backs you up, is merely one more device of yours for stripping us of what the landlord has left? Ah, I cannot tell. I am not a bureaucrat. This only do I know, that when Victoria came to the throne, you charged the nation only £12,700,000 or so for our fighting men and their weapons of war, and their ships, and now, oh! most sublime bureaucrats, you demand of us more than £30,000,000—last year it was nearly £40,000,000—all to keep the peace. What with the interest on the debts we inherit from old wars and these demands, we have to give you, our serene masters, nigh £60,000,000 a year in the quietest of times; more than thirty shillings per man for war purposes, nearly £10 per family, enough to keep all the labourers in the kingdom, and their wives and families in bread and onions for nigh half the year.

Nor have you been satisfied with the mere increase in our fighting tackle. Every branch of what is facetiously termed the "public services"—the agencies by which you, our resplendent masters, suck our life blood up—has enormously increased its

demands. At the beginning of this jubile epoch of yours, the "Civil Service Estimates" did not exceed £9,000,000; now, they reach £30,000,000.

And the load of our local expenditure has likewise mounted apace, so that now, in addition to their rents, our lords and masters take from us more than £120,000,000 a year. Yea, if you add the charges for gas and water in towns, the sum required exceeds £130,000,000. And, strange thing surely in so great an empire, some nine and a half millions of this is needed to feed the poor whom you create for the exercise of our Christian sympathies, sweet lords and "lord" bishops, and rent swallows, and tithe eaters, and usurers all. Ah! if we poor and despised ones had but these rents, or if you, our most stately masters, but paid these charges out of your private stores, methinks this weary England would wear a different face. Condescend, I beseech you, to look at it a little in this light. What would you do now, were "the masses," on whom you fatten, to rise up one day and meet your demands with a sullen unanimous "No?" What if they bid you begone into the outer darkness where there are neither kings nor landlords, where valiant man-slayers have no place, and the proud office-holder finds no rest for the sole of his foot?

I see "lord" bishops and their trains, and nobles and high-bullioned fighting-men and tax-eaters of every degree smile at my innocence in putting such questions.

"Foolish creature," they say; "have we not placed a Parliament between us and you? Go, get you to your ballot-boxes, and vent your humours there."

I listen and am dumb. Yes, we have a Parliament, a "free and independent Parliament," crammed with unselfish patriots, who never tire of telling us that they love us. So much do they love us that they are delighted to serve us for nothing, and not only that, but to spend money like water when need is, to persuade us, the humble "masses," to elect them, and will not have it

otherwise. Yes, we have a Parliament, have had one for two hundred years, and so nobly have they served us for love, these Parliaments, that you and I, my poor friends, have now the glorious task of upholding a mighty empire "on which the sun never sets;" of paying debts we never contracted; of finding full ninety millions of pounds a year for our "Services," and our most sacred Queen's Court atop thereof. Surely none of us will raise a murmur against the noble institutions which have brought us thus far, at the splendid disinterested services which have illustrated to all the world the never-before-understood principle of civilization by Corporate mortgage. All honour to the wisdom of the nobles and priests and bureaucrats who have, by the help of a free and patriotic Parliament, made the British Empire the usurer's heaven. Grudge them not their jubile.

When I cast my eyes abroad upon the world as it is, I call myself a fool. A Jewish Jubile! "Nay, go and hide thy head, old world dotard that thou art!" The jubile we are about to celebrate is the mock holy jubile of CANT. Behold it, ye masses, and grovel and lick the dust. Nay, arise ye, and sing a new *Canticle*—a hymn of the hypocrite and simulator; of the mouther of sweet phrases; of deluder and deluded.

Sing ye the song of *Cant*, and of the glory thereof. Cant, by Mammon's wondrous alchemy, makes god mean gold. By Cant kings subsist, and princes are lauded for unjust judgments. By Cant the poor and needy are comforted, and persuaded that their lot has been ordained of high Heaven. By Cant thank they those who give them stones for bread. Cant covereth iniquity as with an embroidered garment, and comforts the downtrodden by the sweetness of its illusions. Cant enables a man decked out in fantastic black livery, or in the gorgeous robes of its holiness, to call himself the "vicar of God," and to assume to dispense everlasting life and death by the fiat of the Almighty, whose spirit, he asserts has been transmitted to him by the "laying on of hands." Cant fashions our minds to believe this man, and we give him of

our substance, and he swells out and grows dainty and sleek and selfish, and asks for more, and ever more, and we trust him, and bow before him, for the sake of the clothes he wears, and because he says he stands in the place of the inscrutable Deity.

Cant, all efficacious servant of lust, of Mammon, of kings, and emperors, enables another man, who has tricked himself forth in red garments and golden trappings, and girded a sword by his side, and mounted a mettlesome steed, to call himself a "great captain;" and forthwith his deeds of slaughter in time of war, or his deeds of rapine in time of peace are sacred in our eyes. The vulgar murderer in plain garments we hang; the murderer in feathers and gold lace we reverence, because Cant is all powerful, and masks for us what the great ones of the earth do not wish us to see.

To the great captains we are persuaded by Cant to give our sons to be led forth to slaughter, priests of all sects blessing them as they go. Cant comforts us when our substance is harried from us to reward the ever-glorious butchers in uniform; and when our children are slain in unjust wars, Cant commands from us transports of joy, because of our victories. We vote our mighty men of war peerages and pensions, and, as rewards to those who bore the brunt of the battle, on the common soldiers we bestow tin medals. Oh, Cant! all glorious and potent ministrant of Mammon, how shall we glorify thee? Thou art the most potent spirit on earth! At thy bidding men give up their manliness, and become as toads crawling on the ground.

By Cant the voices of plutocrat, aristocrat, usurers all, charm us into selecting them as leaders in the great House of Harangue, and persuade us that theirs is the most disinterested of service. They speak softly to us of peace and economy, and we believe them, though each year their masters and ours, the great army of official locusts, eat more and more into our substance. "Choose us and you shall manage your own affairs through us and our valuable patriotic and gratuitous services," they ever cry, and

through Cant we believe them, and shout for joy, and call them our saviours.

Oh, Cant, all potent spell, glamour of life, how shall we praise thee!

Thus far my song, but I must not let my feelings carry me too far. Again have I strayed, but in straying I have stumbled into light, and no longer grope in darkness endeavouring to comprehend this jubile. There it stands before me, clear as noonday—the jubile of Cant! Contemplate it, bless it if you can.

But after all, what has this got to do with the claims of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen and Empress, to enjoy her own private jubile? Those masterful beings who surround her throne and profess to worship her, the easier to grow rich at our expense, have, I allow, excellent reason to hold their jubile, for they have fooled us to good purpose; but where is the Queen in it all?

Poor old woman! One sees that she is but a weapon in the hands of our masters, a piece of conjuror's furniture—good to extract guineas by. Disabused of Cant, one sees this and pities her. Aged is she and lonely; blinded, too, by the witchery of seeming to be, until she takes the huzzas which rend her ears for “loyalty.”

Unhappy old Queen! I am not sure that the masses should not do her more honour, feel more genuinely for her, than all those who seek their own interests in celebrating her jubile.

She is grumbled at on many grounds, this lonely woman; and most blasphemed against in private by those who in public most debase their manhood and womanhood by grovelling before the throne.

“She takes too much money from us,” is one of their cries. But would these grumblers not absorb the more if she took less? and after all, what does she take? Not, I make it, quite a million a year, including her private allowance of sixty thousand pounds and her household allowances, which the great nobles and their dependents mostly consume as supplement, to their rents; and

all the dowries of her sons and her daughters, and their wives and husbands, and widows and children; and all that she has given to her German connexions; and the income of her royal commander-in-chief; and the perquisites of her sons from the fighting services; and the revenues from national domains. A million a year! What is that compared to the sixty millions for fighting services and debt, or the twenty millions for the other services uncharacterisable? It is but as a drop in the ocean. Take it away and give it to feed paupers, and it would not keep them, with their overseers and friends, alive for one quarter of a year. Had they no other provision they and their keepers would die. Looked at in this light, who would grudge the throne its million? Why, it would not do much more than pay genuine Members of Parliament each a thousand a year, with something for travelling expenses, to look after the affairs of the nation the twelvemonth through. The thing is not worth talking about.

“What,” cries my mentor, “do you not see that this expenditure upon the Queen and her court gives but a pretext for wasting many millions elsewhere, and that it has been growing ever since she came to the throne. She started with less than half a million, and now the royal “ring” costs double. And do you not see that it is upon this outlay, all to further make-believe of ruling, that the scale of all our other expenditure is arranged? You are indeed but a dotard if you are blind to these things. Had we no court we might make an end some day of feathered and gilded man-butchers, of dowered and liveried priests of Mammon; nay, we might even throw off the bureaucrats and at last govern ourselves.”

So! possibly you are right, my friend, though over zealous. I will not dispute with you. Only you must allow me to point out once more that I am not now dealing with things as they ought to be, but as they are. This, remember, is the age of Cant, and taking the standard it sets before us, measuring the wants of the court by what the nobles and our masters all take from us, I

humbly maintain that they are not immoderate. I have heard of kings who asked more—and took it. If this, then, were all that could be said against Her Majesty, I for one should be disposed to give her her jubile and welcome. Bless her and let her go in peace; already the shadows of life's evening are around her, and the hour approaches when even Cant may not comfort her.

But this is not all. There are murmurs from many sides that Her Majesty does no work for her money. You hear fashionable people complain that she never holds court shows in London, or mingles with them in their displays of wanton grandeur, or sanctions by her presence their moralities. The upper world of our masters is angry with her on these grounds, and blasphemes in secret, though shouting hosannas at her jubile. And London tradesmen take up the wail, roundly asserting that Her Majesty does not spend enough. Trade is bad, they say, because the Queen hoards her share in the taxes; so they too curse as they subscribe to do her honour. Politicians likewise make complaint. Behold, they point out, Her Majesty pays no regard to the demands of public business, nor considers at all the convenience of her Ministers. An aged man like Mr. Gladstone, a diseased hearted man like the late Lord Iddesleigh, a "poor sailor" like Lord Salisbury, has to rush about after her to Osborne or to Balmoral, or affairs of importance are delayed, while "Queen's messengers," at great expense, rush to and fro between London and these places, or between London and the Continent; and Her Majesty appears to care no more for the worry and waste of time and money she causes, than if the nation and its affairs were of as little importance as the business of a "guinea pig" director.

Well, grant all this true, and what of it? I can easily find an explanation of Her Majesty's conduct which may be more than an excuse for her. Two explanations, in fact, may be given, and people can take their choice. She may either avoid her courtiers, because she sickens at the sight of their sycophancy, or because she thinks her royal dignity might be injured if she made it too

common. Who shall say that the altar to the unknown God was not the most awesome in Athens ?

And, as regards her Ministers, may she not act from calculation? I can conceive it possible that she is bent upon weaning them also from habits of fawning and hypocrisy. What is more likely than that, believing in the democratic tendencies alleged to exist in this generation, Her Most Excellent Majesty is bent upon gradually educating us all up to a pitch of manliness which shall enable us to dispense with royal functions altogether ?

Much may be said for this view. The Queen seems to me to have been for many years, almost since the death of Albert the gilded, labouring to teach the nation that she is a woman even as other women are, and no demigod or God's vicar at all. Now and then she lets fawning crowds worship her because they cannot live without a visible deity of some kind ; but I cannot think that her heart is in the business. You have but to read her "Leaves from the Journal," particularly the second bundle thereof, to see this. All is homely there and commonplace—what we ate and what we drank, and wherewithal we were amused—homely and human.

Consider, above all, Her Majesty's treatment of the late John Brown, "Esquire." You know, I make no doubt, how society raved and spued forth its unclean venom about that man—the Society with the big S., the Society of Primrose Leagues and *Saturday Reviews*, a Society, the mention of which suggests the need for a moral disinfectant, efficacious and handy of appliance. Listening to Society's tattle about "the Queen and John Brown," the mind became charged with everything base and abominable.

Did the facts at all accord with Society's putrid version thereof? In no wise. I speak of that I know. I had not the honour indeed of this illustrious menial's acquaintance, but friends of mine knew him well, and I can trust their testimony. They tell me that the one distinguishing quality of this man's mind was honesty. John Brown swore much, so much that her most

gracious Majesty contracted the habit of softly saying, "Hush, Brown, hush," to moderate the strength of his language. John Brown also imbibed his whiskey with freedom; but he was honest, true as fine tempered steel to the mistress who trusted him. Where courtiers would cringe and fawn around her, John stood up in manly independence, and told her his mind. From John she could always get the truth, freely and fearlessly spoken. Therefore Her Majesty trusted him; therefore the courtiers hated him and his power. As he himself used often to say, in his fine, broad, rolling Aberdeenshire dialect, "Thae dahmt scoonrils o' English gentry hate me, and wud like to see me oot o' this; but deevil a e'en o' them's fit to tak my place. A bonny like conach they'd mak o' the Queen's affairs gin they had the han'lin' o' them." And that was the truth. Of all the royal favourites I ever heard of, John Brown—the rough, swearing, tyrannical, hasty, warm hearted peasant, John Brown—was the most honest.

No wonder, therefore, that the Queen loved and trusted him; that the language she placed on his first tombstone read like the wail of a heart broken by unutterable sorrow. You have forgotten the words? Let me recall them to your memory. Court and family influences have forced Her Majesty to change that tombstone, and to put a colder inscription on the new one; but the words of the old live in some memories yet, and are worth preserving. Here they are—

"A tribute of loving, grateful, and everlasting friendship and affection from his truest, best, and most grateful friend Victoria R. and I."

Could language be more touching, more exquisitely expressive of grief? And the man about whom these words were written was only a peasant, one who had humbly carried her husband's gun in the sunny days of her early womanhood—a peasant indeed, but true hearted, and brave, and masterful—a man in whom even a Queen and Empress might love and confide.

But "Society," and courtiers, and sundry of her own family professed themselves, as I have said, shocked at this language. Cruel words were spoken, pressure was brought to bear upon the aged lady, lonely in her sorrow, and this first tombstone had to disappear. In its place, when last I saw the spot where John Brown lies sleeping the sleep common to kings and peasants, I found a brand new memorial stone, fresh gilded, with lines of poetry upon it, and words from the Jewish Scriptures, together with the following inscription of the Queen's—

"This stone is erected in affectionate and grateful remembrance of John Brown, the devoted and faithful personal attendant and friend of Queen Victoria, in whose services he had been for thirty-four years."

Social and family clamour had, we see, brought Her Majesty thus far.* John, the friend, the trusted guide and guardian might, by courtly permission, be loved still, but only as a "servant." What honest heart does not feel pity for this ageing Queen, whose womanliness was thus smothered? She has only her lickplatter courtiers to lean upon now. In other and happier days she leaned upon the strong, true arm of John Brown. Together they often wandered among the woods, in the valleys, and on the hillsides around Balmoral, or visited the humble folks to be found in the cottages there, John's kinsfolk and friends. Together they took tea with gentle Mrs. Grey, the farmer's widow at Allan-a-quoich, or visited the sick, and in their walks talked of business and settled affairs of state.

At all times of perplexity or danger John's honest voice was ready to speak out; John's stalwart form shielded her. One

* What sort of malice entered into the persecution of the Queen in this matter can perhaps be guessed at from a remark made by the driver of our trap as we were coming back from our visit to Crathie churchyard. As we were passing Balmoral, an artist in the party happened to observe that there was a bronze statue of John Brown, by Boehm, at the Castle. The driver heard the words, for our vehicle was open, and turning round said "Yes, there is, and it is in the flower garden. And there is one of the Prince Consort too, but it is in the cow park." Miserable groundling, he did but repeat the sneers of his masters.

might give numberless illustrations of the friendly, manly helpfulness which Brown was ever ready to display towards the Queen, but I am more concerned to display the homely human simplicity of their life when delivered from the unreal ceremonials of a court, and will here set down two anecdotes illustrative thereof. They show the strong natural human bond which marked the friendship of the two, as well as the frankness and freedom of the intercourse which Her Most Gracious Majesty found so restful and refreshing in the seclusion of Osborne or Balmoral.

The first incident I shall relate occurred during one of their quiet walks on Deeside. Her Majesty, leaning on the arm of the ever faithful John, had come in one of her walks to a little stream which soaked its way through mossy banks to the river. It was but a tiny rivulet, but at the place where she struck it the ground on either bank was spongy, and Her Majesty hesitated to jump across. John Brown did not hesitate. With one manly stride he was over, and, turning round, he held out his hand, at one and the same time to invite the Queen to follow, and to help her. Still Her Majesty hesitated, gathering up her garments doubtfully, fearful of the wet moss. Seeing her thus timorous, and growing impatient, John gave his hand a half-imperious, half-encouraging wave, and cried in his rich, northern Doric, "Hoot, loup! deil a fear o' ye; ye winna fa' in!"

Thus encouraged, and with a trustful smile, Her Gracious Majesty put her hand in John's, leaped as she was bid, and landed safe beside him on the dry heath. Could anything exceed the simple homeliness of this incident?

Take this other story, and remember that these things I tell you are true. Her Gracious Majesty, accompanied as always by Brown, was one day making her round of farewells among the cottages and keepers' lodges at Balmoral previous to going south. In one of the houses John lingered to tease a buxom lass, the daughter of an old friend of his, declaring that he would not go without a kiss. Speaking as usual in his full Aberdeenshire dia-

lect, he declared again and again, "Noo, Victoria, my lass,"—the girl was named Victoria after the Queen—"noo, Victoria, my lass, I'm nae gyeawin oot o' this wuntin' a kiss, sae ye may jist as weel gie's't, an' mak na mair about it."

"Oh no, I won't," said Miss Victoria, who had just come home from a boarding school, and gave herself airs in consequence, perhaps, as girls sometimes will.

"Eh, but ye maun ye ken, for I'm gyeawin awa the morn, and we wanna be back for sax month, and I cudna think o' leavin' ye in sic a caul hertit wye. Sae, come awa wi' my kiss, lassie, I'm nae gyeawin oot o' this wuntin' 't." And as he spoke he advanced to seize her.

"You'll have to bide a while then, for I'm not going to kiss you, Mr. Brown," answered Victoria with a little toss of the head, as she backed towards her mother's chair.

"Hoot, toot, noo, noo, come awa wi' 't, and neen o' yer haverin'. I cudna think of leavin' withoot my kiss," repeated the Highlander good humouredly, and seizing the girl to exact his tribute by force.

Just at this juncture Her Most Gracious Majesty, who had already said good-bye to the family, and was waiting by the door till it should please her faithful attendant to drop his teasing, put her head inside and remarked, "Don't you think, Brown, you are rather hard on Victoria?" When he heard this question John let the girl go, with the remark "Aweel, aweel, may be, but I's be upsides wi' ye when I come back." Perhaps he said this merely to cover his retreat. At any rate his obedience was instant and complete. He said good-bye without his kiss and departed with his mistress.

"Trivial incidents these," some may say and say truly. Yet how genuine is the life they disclose; how simple and homely; how perfectly human. No false State was here, none of that apeing of divinity so often seen at courts. All was plain and natural, and therefore sweet to look upon.

Faithful, indeed, was this rough, strong Highlander, honest and whole-hearted also, one of Nature's gentlemen, a born ruler of flunkeys. The Queen did well to make him her friend. By this friendship she has taught us, I think, that she, though a sovereign, the head of a far reaching social and bureaucratic organization, designed to keep the masses wholesomely poor, is, nevertheless, a woman—one of the people. Behind her kingly trappings and State, and all the adulations and sycophancy of a Court, a human heart beats, and her life is thus in this respect to us full of invaluable instruction.

Looking at her isolation, and love of solitude in the light of a friendship like this, it would hardly be a bold thing to call the Queen a true democrat. All honour to her for this lesson. In return for what she teaches us by her life, shall we not grant her her jubile? It is but a thing of Mammon to be sure, nevertheless we envy her not for it. Nay, "the masses" might rather desire that the Queen's jubile may be made as glorious as courtier and high priest of Mammon-fawning slaves all can make it. The grandiose displays of wealth, the self-seeking begging of social parasites and all the crawling and sycophancy may gratify those who indulge therein, and can surely do no harm to the Queen, for the contrast between her simplicity and Society's hypocrisy and shoddy ideals must strike her as painfully as it does the people.

We, the great unnamed multitude may not participate in the glories of this celebration, save by giving of our means. The doors of the great temple of Mammon and Cant will not open for us on the day when royalty, with its train, holds high jubile festival there; for our clothes are too mean, our hands too horny. But we can gather in our thousands, and tens of thousands, from the slums of the West, hid behind the mansions of aristocrat and plutocrat; from the blind alleys, and styes, and hunger hives, and fever dens, and dank cellars of the East and South, whither the sacred legal rights of the land owner have driven us; and

gratify our eyes by gazing in silent awe, if not in admiration, upon the spectacle of a high jubile, of the age of Debt and Cant, of a Queen and Empress sitting lonely and friendless in her glory, because "one of the people"—her faithful peasant—is no longer behind her. We may gaze on this spectacle, and dream perhaps, if not too hungry, of days yet to be, when the people shall live no more in want, when the nation shall need no visible God, with fleshly angels, all devouring, to teach it humility, reverence for laws it has never made, and the blessedness of giving the fruit of its labour to maintain hordes of licensed braves, and swarms of official locusts, as guardians of "peace and order," and tutors of a due respect for the "propertied classes."

Yes, my friends, Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen and Empress, may be held, on the ground of her humble friendship, to deserve her jubile. Grudge it not to her; mock not the superfine "lord" bishops in holy embroideries, with thousands upon thousands a year bestowed upon them as reward for their services to the God whom Aaron fashioned in Horeb; grudge it not nor murmur. Stand there all in silence, with your rags and your want-pinched faces, in the open day, and as you stand be not forgetful that after all there may be something grand in your lot. You are the great broad foundation upon which this sublime British Empire rests, and it is only reasonable that the higher this Empire rises towards Heaven in its grandeur, the flatter to the earth should you be pressed by its weight, for it is but like a new Tower of Babel. Meditate on these things, and when the brave show is over, go home to your hunger and misery, if possible comforted. Who knows but what some day, even you also may have a jubile after the manner of Moses.

Dark indeed is the prospect for the mortgaged millions of the Empire, if we look at their lot only from the usurer's standpoint. Heavy is the burden they have to bear. Yet I think I see a faint glimmer of the dawning of a better day—a day when the false and more than pagan bond-secured civilization which we now are

proud of, shall give place to something nobler, more true. The very weight of the load which our taskmasters have laid upon us will, ere long, break down the superstructure of Cant and usury and civilization, secured by parchment, of which they are so proud. Yes, we also, the humble and the unknown, the toiler and the oppressed, shall have our jubile when the civilization of the usurer shrivels and dies before the upheaval of the nether fires of a new life of freedom. Men and brethren all, are you ready for the higher life of that better day? If not, go grovel at the feet of your masters, and lick the hands which hold you down.